THE DESERTER: A POEM.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

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A

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

LORD VISCOUNT

NUNEHAM,

THIS LITTLE POEM,

AS AN OFFERING OF FRIENDSHIP,

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE SERVANT

EDWARD JERNINGHAM.

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THE DESERTER.

I.

Conceal'd beneath illuſtrious deeds,
A ſimple tale I rear:
A tale that ſoft-ey'd Pity reads,
And honors with a tear.

II.

The Spaniard left the hoſtile plain,
To ſeek his native land,
Beneath the ſails that ſwept the main,
Cabeysa join'd the band:

III.

Who as he met his country's foes,
Within the field of Fame,
Above his rank obſcure aroſe
And grac'd his humble name:

IV.

Yet not the early wreath of Fame
With haughtineſs was twin'd:
Nor pride nor fickleneſs could claim
The empire of his mind:

V.

The lowly hut, beneath whoſe roof
He ſigh'd a ſad adieu,
Received him (time and diſtance-proof)
To love and MARY true:

VI.

This hamlet-fair, by Fortune ſcorn'd,
Seem'd Nature's fav'rite child,
With hand profuſe by her adorn'd
—The flow'ret of the wild!

VII.

Her neat but homely garment preſs'd
The pure, the feeling heart,
Oft ſought in vain behind the veſt
Of decorated art:

VIII.

" If ſharing all thy cares (ſhe ſaid)
" Has paled my beauty's roſe,
" Ah know! for thee the heart that bled,
" With all its paſſion glows:

IX.

" Bleſt moment to my wiſh that gives
" The long long abſent youth!
" He lives—th'endear'd CABEYSA lives,
" And love confirms the truth.

X.

" When thy brave comrades fell around,
" What pow'r's benignant care,
" Secur'd thee from the fatal wound?
" And MARY from deſpair?

XI.

" Oft in the troubling dream of night
" I ſaw the ruſhing ſpear,
" Nor did the morn's awak'ning light
" Diſpel the ling'ring fear.

XII.

" Thy tender fears (the youth replied)
" Ah give them to the air!
" To happineſs we're now allied,
" And pleaſure be our care:

XIII.

" Let us purſue the joy begun,
" Nor loſe by dull delay:
" Say, MARY, ſhall to-morrow's ſun
" Illume our nuptial day?

XIV.

With look declin'd ſhe bluſh'd conſent—
Reſerve that takes alarm,
And Love and Joy their influence lent
To raiſe meek Beauty's charm.

XV.

The gueſts, to hail the wedded pair,
Beneath their roof repair'd,
With them the little feaſt to ſhare
Their ſcanty purſe prepar'd:

XVI.

Tho' no delicious wines were pour'd,
Mirth took his deſtin'd place,
The hand-maid Neatneſs ſpread the board,
And ſage Content ſaid grace.

XVII.

Scarce thro' one haſty week had Love
His grateful bleſſings ſhed,
When bliſs (as flies the frighted dove)
Their humble manſion fled:

XVIII.

'Twas at BELLONA's voice it flew,
That call'd to war's alarms;
Bad the youth riſe to valor true,
And break from MARY's arms:

XIX.

But ſhe ſtill ſtrained him to her heart,
To lengthen the adieu:
" Ah what, (ſhe ſaid) ſhou'dſt thou depart,
" Shall I and ſorrow do?

XX.

" Say, valiant youth, when thou'rt away
" Who'll raiſe my drooping head?
" How ſhall I chace the fears that ſay
" Thy lov'd CABEYSA's dead?

XXI.

" With thine my fate I now involve,
" Intent thy courſe to ſteer,
" No words ſhall ſhake my firm reſolve,
" Not ev'n that trickling tear:

XXII.

" Fram'd for each ſcene of ſoft delight,
" (He ſaid) thy gentle form,
" As ſhrinks the lily at the blight,
" Will droop beneath the ſtorm:

XXIII.

" Bleſt in thy preſence! ev'ry pain
" (She added) brings its charm,
" And love, tho' falls the beating rain,
" Will keep this boſom warm,

XXIV.

Her zeal (the ſupplement of ſtrength)
Upheld her many a day,
But Nature's pow'rs ſubdued at length,
On Sickneſs' couch ſhe lay:

XXV.

Three painful days unſeen ſhe lay
Of him ſhe held ſo dear:
" Ah does he thus my love repay?
She ſaid—and dropt a tear:

XXVI.

" Cabeysa, at a league's remove,
" Dwells on the tent-ſpread hill:
" Ah wherefore did he vow true love,
" And not that vow fulfil?

XXVII.

Yet not deficiency of truth
Forbad to yield relief,
Stern pow'r with-held the tender youth,
And duty to his chief:

XXVIII.

Who wisely-counsel'd drew a line,
To check the hand of Stealth,
That ravag'd wide th' encircling vine,
The humble peasant's wealth:

XXIX.

To pass the line, it was ordain'd,
Whoever shou'd presume,
Shou'd a Deserter be arraign'd,
And meet the coward's doom:

XXX.

This law by equity approv'd,
And to the peaſant dear,
Soon to the brave CABEYSA prov'd
Deſtructively ſevere:

XXXI.

Now MARY's image haunts his ſoul,
In Woe's dark tints array'd,
While to his breaſt compaſſion ſtole,
And all her claims diſplay'd:

XXXII.

" For me her native home, (he ſaid)
" For me each weeping friend,
" For me a father's arms ſhe fled—
" And ſhall not love attend?

XXXIII.

" Say, for a choſen lover's ſake,
" What more cou'd woman do?
" And now that health and peace forſake,
" Shall I forſake her too?

XXXIV.

" Now ſtretch'd upon the naked ground,
" Oppreſs'd with pain and fear,
" She caſts a languid eye around,
" Nor ſees CABEYSA near:

XXXV.

" Now, now ſhe weeps at my delay,
" And ſhall neglect be mine?
" Submit, ye fears, to Pity's ſway!
He ſpoke—and croſs'd the line.

XXXVI.

Soon at his ſight the fair reſum'd
Each captivating grace:
On her pale cheek the roſe rebloom'd,
And ſmiles illum'd her face.

XXXVII.

Yet to that cheek return'd in vain
Bright Health's vermilion dye,
For bitter tears that cheek ſhall ſtain,
And dim her brilliant eye:

XXXVIII.

The youth returning thro' the gloom,
At midnight's ſecret hour,
Was ſeiz'd—and to diſhonour's tomb
Doom'd by the martial pow'r.

XXXIX.

To meet his fate at wake of day
(Love's victim) he was led,
No weakneſs did his cheek betray,
While to the chief he ſaid:

XL.

" If in the battle death I've dar'd,
" In all its horror dreſt,
" Think not this ſcene, by thee prepar'd,
" Sheds terror on my breaſt:

XLI.

" Yet, at MARIA's hapleſs fate,
" My fortitude impairs,
" Unmann'd I ſink beneath the weight
" Of her oppreſſive cares:

XLII.

" Ah! when her grief-torn heart ſhall bleed,
" Some little ſolace grant,
" Oh guard her in the hour of need
" From the rude hand of want:

XLIII.

Now, kneeling on the fatal ſpot,
He twin'd the dark'ning band:
The twelve, who drew th'unwelcome lot,
Reluctant took their ſtand:

XLIV.

And now the murm'ring throng grew dumb,
'Twas ſilence all—ſave where,
At intervals, the mournful drum
Struck horror on the ear:

XLV.

Now, with their death-fraught tubes uprear'd,
The deſtin'd twelve were ſeen—
And now the exploſion dire was heard
That clos'd CABEYSA's ſcene.

XLVI.

Another ſcene remain'd behind
For MARY to ſupply—
She comes! mark how her tortur'd mind
Speaks thro' th'expreſſive eye:

XLVII.

"Forbear—will ye in blood (ſhe ſaid)
" Your cruel hands imbrue?
" On me, on me your vengeance ſhed,
" To me alone 'tis due:

XLVIII.

" Relent—and to theſe arms again
" The valiant youth reſtore.
" I rave—already on the plain
" He welters in his gore.

XLIX.

Advancing now, ſhe pierc'd the crowd,
And reach'd the fatal place,
Where, lifting from the corſe the ſhroud,
No ſemblance cou'd ſhe trace.

L.

" Is this—oh blaſting view! (ſhe cried)
" The youth who lov'd too well!
" His love for me the law defied,
" And for that love he fell.

XLVIII.

" When will the grave this form receive?
" The grave to which he's fled?
" There, only there I'll ceaſe to grieve.
She ſpoke—
And join'd the dead.

XLIX.

FINIS.